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Title: Need to stop outsourcing of Railway Mail Service of the Postal Department in Dharwad, Karnataka.

SHRI PRALHLAD JOSHI (DHARWAD): Mr. Chairman Sir, we are all aware that Railway Mail Services (RMS) are the age-old basic utility services rendered by Postal Department in coordination of the Railways. It is the lifeline of Postal Department. But there seems to be a deliberate attempt by the postal authorities to shift these services towards the area of privatisation especially mail services without formally announcing it. This is confirmed beyond doubt by turning away these mail services from RMS to road transport vehicles.

In my constituency, namely, the Hubli Division of Karnataka itself, it is reported to me that a section of RMS working in Guntakal Passenger Train, the section working in the Hubli-Bangalore-Mysore Intercity Train and Hubli-Bellary Railway Mail Services are withdrawn and in its place, private vehicles are being hired and mail bags are dispatched. Likewise, the RMS route towards Sholapur, Bijapur and Bagalkot are also being converted into Road Transport Mail Services by hiring private vehicles. The reason being given includes speedy mail services, unlike in the RMS as there have been less frequency in rail services, and we can reach out to various interior places quicker by road than by rail. But this is not well justified if we look at an example of how the mail bags that are carried by Ranichannamma Express from Bangalore to Hubli which are meant to be dispatched towards Bijapur and Bagalkot. These mail bags are said to be dumped in Hubli RMS office till late in the evening to be picked up by private vehicles which cause inordinate delay in distribution. It is distributed only late in the evening.

It is needless to explain how this move for privatisation results in reduction of staff strength and lead to distress in the existing staff working in RMS. It is repeatedly brought to my notice by the RMS Employees Union. Therefore, I urge the Central Government to take this matter into consideration.

I have one more point to be brought to your kind notice and it is about the long pending issue of regularisation of 32 casual labourers in Hubli Division. It is pending since many years and even the Supreme Court in its recent judgement has directed the Government of India to lay down specific guidelines. In spite of this, RMS Hubli Division has not taken it into consideration and the labourers are not being regularised. They are working there for more than 15 years. They should take their service into account and justice should be given to them.